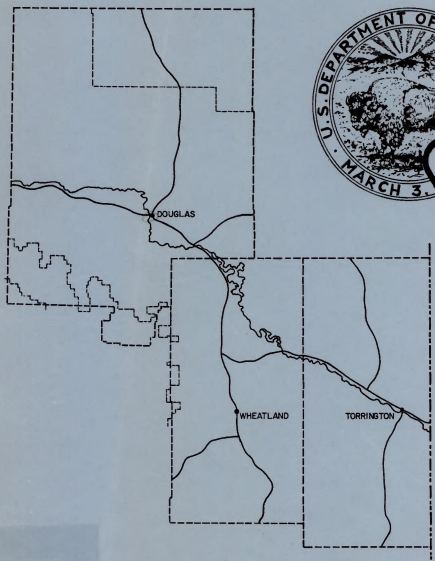
Doug Ks - 3/people
May 21
Spring 1975 (DPIG)
1698

BLM

LAND USE PLANNING....



U. S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

U. S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

Casper District
Platte River Resource Area

Staff 7:30 Douglas - 31 people - 1st Nat'l Bank Hope Room.
Bob Wilbur - Advertised by letters, radio & TV
Bob Dale - Newspaper failed to publicize.
Von Swain - — 8:30 —
H&E officer - Jerry Hixon.
7:45 PM —
opening remarks - Wilbur - Background & Planning System.
Converse - phthx & Bowler - Co

Von Swain - 1 slides. 2. Recommendation areas.
3. Mgt. recommendations
dev. controlled use
* slides - 7 Resources detail good. about 10 min

close out Wilbur
invite written comments.

I&E Mgr. prepare flyer booklet with hearing.

comments
Geologist - Mining claims
Co Agent - who national say.
Rancher - slide misleading.
Cow Co planning office - concepts.
Land dev. posals Pr.
" " Forest near Forest boundaries.
Walt Reynolds - wildlife Mgt. (sig habitat list)
not wildlife only
SCS - La Pale Dev. Recs.
weed problem on La Pale Cr.
Excluding further grazing ?
protection Bozeman trail?
Do away with stock driveway 8 Smith & W Reynolds.
strip Mining Reclamation.
?on strippable coal open.
Uranium — areas are large.
BK forest ferret
Enlarge Co. parks.
Spring caches as well as sagebrush
Need more contact with Ranchers. — mail ranchers booklets.
?on Grazing Proposed Regs

INTRODUCTION

We need your help!

We're the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and we need your ideas on how 239,000 acres of National Resource Lands in Converse, Platte, and Goshen Counties should be used.

These lands--often called "public lands" or "public domain"--contain resources that are especially valuable to mining, grazing, wildlife, recreation, and archeological interests. Approximately 5 percent of the energy rich Powder River Basin is included in the planning unit.

There are many possible uses that can be made of the National Resource Lands. Often the uses are conflicting. We would appreciate your help in resolving such conflicts. You can also help identify other possible uses or problems of which we may not be aware.

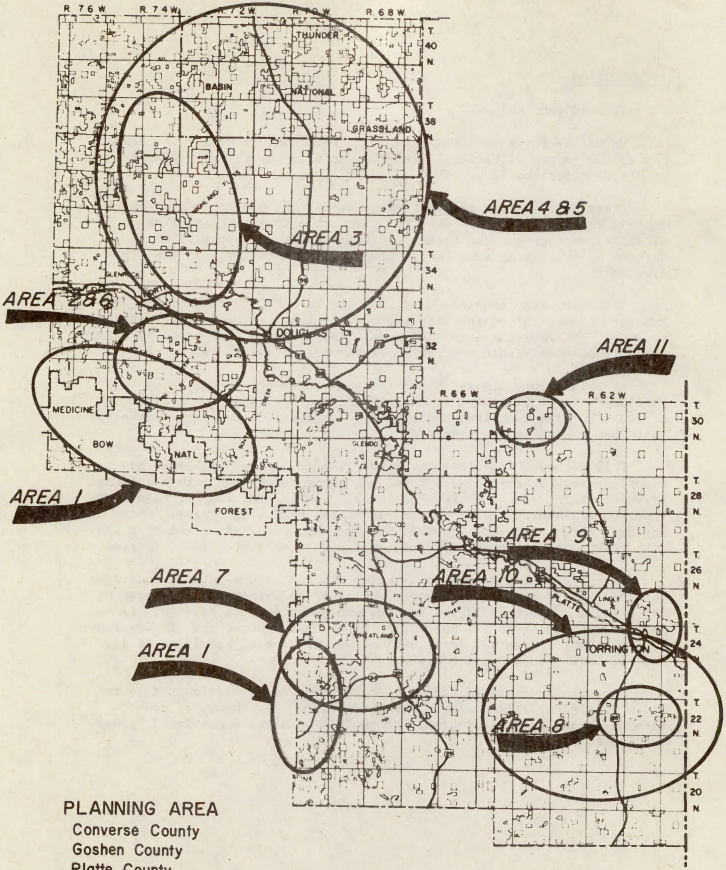
At this point, BLM is in the initial stages of planning. We realize that our data base is not complete. That is why we are coming to you. We need your land use ideas and suggestions to help us make the best land use decisions possible.

This document describes the lands, the management problems and opportunities associated with them, and their relationship to adjoining private, state, and other federal lands. The information has been drawn from BLM's planning system (described in the following pages). This document and the attendant public meetings are designed to acquaint you with resource relationships, conflicts, and alternatives for this area.

In our planning we are considering all the area's natural resources and the uses known to us. However, we have concentrated our efforts on lands where BLM owns both the surface and subsurface because this is the land on which we have the most data. If a resource use that is important to you is not discussed, it is because of our lack of knowledge of it, not our lack of concern for it.

Through our planning effort to this point we have attempted to resolve conflicts, and develop alternatives as we see them. If you see them differently, or if you see things that we haven't mentioned, please tell us so.

INDEX MAP



PLANNING AREA
Converse County
Goshen County
Platte County

NOTE:
AREA 12 PERTAINS TO THE ENTIRE AREA.

DESCRIPTION OF THE NORTH PLATTE PLANNING UNIT

The North Platte Planning Unit covers Converse, Platte and Goshen Counties. This planning unit is a part of the Platte River Resource Area. The present series of planning meetings cover these three counties.

The topography of the unit is largely high rolling plains rising gently then abruptly to the Laramie Mountain Range, a series of east-west uplifts in southern Converse County. To the north and east, the mountains give way to rolling sagebrush plains, grasslands, and some sand dunes. The sagebrush and grass mesas are dissected by numerous drainages, and stream erosion has been very significant in the development of the unit's topography.

Near the town of Fort Laramie the valley of the North Platte River undergoes a great widening from 2 miles to 45 miles. The valley lowland, called the Goshen Hole, is wedge shaped and narrows in a downstream direction to a width of about 2 miles in Nebraska, approximately 100 miles from Fort Laramie.

Within the unit the BLM is responsible for 238,886 surface acres, or about 5 percent of the 4,919,928 total land surface. In addition to land surface, the BLM also administers approximately 1,862,730 acres of federally owned minerals.

Population of the three county area is 12,424. Torrington is the largest city in the unit (4,237 population). Second largest is Douglas (2,677 population) and Wheatland is third (2,498 population). Other major towns in the unit are Glenrock, Guernsey, Lingle, Hartville and Glendo. The energy boom situation is bringing a large number of new people into the area.

Oil and gas production is the major mineral industry in the unit. Almost 3.5 percent of Wyoming's oil production in 1974 came from the 36 producing fields within the unit. The unit contains about 3.5 percent of the total strippable coal reserves for Wyoming, which lies in northern Converse County within the Powder River Basin. The unit also contains important reserves of uranium and iron. New coal and uranium mines are proposed to be built within the next 5 years. When mining of leasable federal minerals under private surface lands, BLM has the responsibility to assure that the land is adequately rehabilitated.

On the surface most of the National Resource Lands are used for livestock grazing. However, less than 5 percent of the livestock forage utilized in these 3 counties is supplied by National Resource Lands. The Platte River Resource Area administers 303 grazing leases in the unit.

The unit also provides a wide variety of wildlife habitat including grassland, sagebrush, and timbered areas. The area is abundant in wildlife including antelope, mule and white-tailed deer, wild turkey, sage

grouse, pheasants, rabbits, prairie dogs, bald and golden eagles, coyotes, bobcats, many bird species and a small number of elk, bighorn sheep and black bear. The Goshen Hole Rim in Platte and Goshen Counties is an identified wintering area for the prairie falcon. The many reservoirs and streams in the planning unit provide fishing and waterfowl habitat. Table Mountain Wildlife Unit, south of Torrington, is an important area for providing waterfowl and other game bird habitat. This area is managed cooperatively by BLM and the Wyoming Game and Fish Department. BLM has the responsibility to manage wildlife habitat on National Resource lands and to assist other agencies in protecting animals on the endangered species list.

The National Resource Lands in this unit provide recreation opportunities for people interested in hunting, fishing, sight-seeing, and rockhounding. Because of the inaccessibility of most of the National Resource Lands, the numbers of people using the area for recreation are small. An exception to this is hunting. The unit receives considerable hunting pressure during the season.

The Oregon Trail traverses the unit, following the North Platte River through all three counties. Many historic sites are associated with the trail and the activities that took place along it. Most significant are Fort Laramie Historical Site, Goshen County; Fort Fetterman Historical Site, Converse County; and the Oregon Trail ruts and Register Cliff near Guernsey in Platte County. Portions of the Bozeman Trail are located in western Converse County.

Other areas of interest include several stage stations in Converse County; Cheyenne-Black Hills Stage Route through Platte and Goshen Counties, Spanish Diggings in Platte County and numerous scenic areas.

WHY LAND USE PLANNING?

One has to look back in history for the answer to this question. The National Resource Lands administered by BLM are in effect residual lands. They are what remains of our original federal estate after a century of homesteading and various grants under the public land laws and reservations for national forests, parks, wildlife refuges, and other special uses. In the past, they were administered primarily on a custodial basis because there was always some question as to their future tenure. However, events of recent years have erased much of the uncertainty over land tenure and the National Resource Lands are now coming under intensive, long-range multiple use management.

In recent years eastern Wyoming has been near the center of the national drive for energy development, and as such it is also the center for much energy development conflict and controversy. BLM is frequently in the midst of these because of the important natural resources under its administration. Decisions must be made in a very sensitive environment, and their ramifications are often far reaching and complex. The

land use decisions that BLM makes can have dramatic effects on the lives of many people, not only in this area but throughout the entire country. That is why we want your ideas on land uses.

Some people wonder why planning boundaries take in more than just the National Resource Lands. The reason is that the National Resource Lands cannot be studied or managed in a vacuum. They are related to the lands around them physically, economically, and socially. For instance, minerals, forage and other materials sold from the National Resource Lands affect the local economy. Wildfire knows no boundaries and can sweep across public and private lands alike. Game animals, which belong to the State, find food and shelter for all or part of a year on the National Resource Lands. For reasons such as these, the boundaries we are dealing with are extended to take in a reasonable geographic, economic, and social area of which the National Resource Lands are an integral part. Certain types of data, such as deer migration routes or fire hazards are gathered throughout the area. However, management framework plan decisions apply ONLY to the National Resource Lands administered by BLM.

THE BLM PLANNING SYSTEM - WHERE ARE WE?

In 1964, BLM started developing a planning process to better determine which land use, or combination of land uses, could take place within given geographic areas. After a period of design and testing, the BLM Planning System was adopted and implementation started in July 1969. This system is presently being used to develop and maintain land use plans which consider all of the various resource uses for all National Resource Lands.

The BLM Planning System is similar to traditional planning approaches. It includes such usual components as goals, objectives, inventory of physical resources, socio-economic data, and public participation. However, it differs in several ways. It has techniques requiring the description and comparison of "trade offs" or what is gained or lost when decisions are made to accept various alternatives. Another major departure from traditional planning philosophy is the concept and requirements of assessing the single-use potentials of each physical resource.

In brief, the system works this way: The first step in the procedure is to delineate the BLM administered land into specific geographic areas. Here we will concern ourselves with the geographic area enclosing Converse, Platte, and Goshen Counties. The basic resource data for this area is collected and analyzed in a document called a Unit Resource Analysis (URA). The URA includes a detailed description of the environment of the area, a physical inventory of individual resources (lands, minerals, livestock, forage, forestry, recreation, wildlife, watershed), and analysis of the resource production opportunities without multiple-use consideration.

After URA's are completed, a Management Framework Plan (MFP) is prepared for a planning area. The MFP is a conceptual plan which indicates how the National Resource Lands in a given geographical area should be managed.

Basically, an MFP is the result of a process designed to identify and reconcile major land and resource use conflicts. The MFP provides a set of goals, objectives, and constraints for an area to guide the development of detailed plans for the management of each resource--much like a blueprint guides an architect. It is prepared using an interdisciplinary approach at the field level of BLM employees. Coordination with a variety of groups and interests is obtained in an organized public participation process. THIS IS WHERE WE ARE NOW. — Public Participation meetings

BLM would appreciate your ideas on the various recommendations we are presenting to you. Your ideas will help us formulate a Management Framework Plan on which our land use decisions for this area will be based. If public input indicates that our recommendations ought to be reworked or revised, we will alter them to fit the new data that the public has supplied. We will work with the public throughout the formulation of the MFP to develop the best plan possible. The public will also be notified of BLM planning decisions.

MFP - conceptual plan - tells us how to manage an area. Future Detailed plans (activity) plans are developed for each resource.

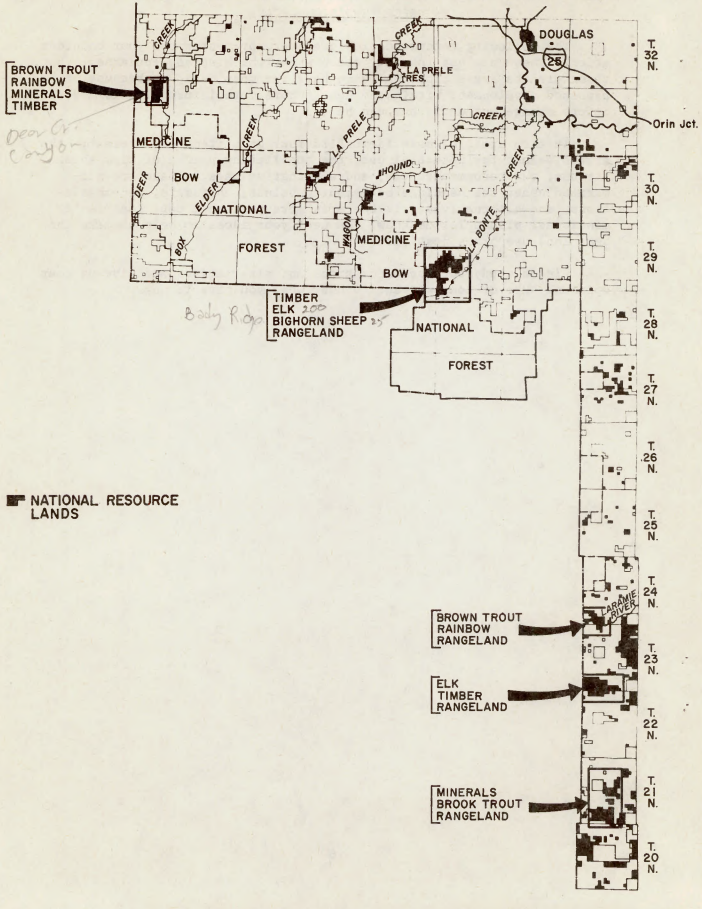
RECOMMENDATION AREAS

The following recommendation areas are presented for your consideration. These are not the only areas about which we are concerned. But, these are the areas about which we have the most data, or because of proposed development within the near future more information is needed before management decisions can be made.

In each area, we have identified four main items of interest: the area's values for potential use, the conflicting points of view about its use, our recommended use, and alternative uses. These are summarized under the headings of resource values, conflicts, recommendations, and alternatives. If there is more pertinent data that isn't mentioned, please let us know. We need your ideas to help us make the best land use plans possible.

Please study our recommendations and alternatives and give us your opinion. Pro or con, we want to hear what you have to say.

RECOMMENDATION AREA I
DEER CREEK CANYON, BALDY RIDGE, UPPER LARAMIE RIVER, SQUAW MTN. & MULE CREEK



RECOMMENDATION AREA 1 - DEER CREEK CANYON, BALDY RIDGE, UPPER LARAMIE RIVER, SQUAW MOUNTAIN AND MULE CREEK

Includes valuable recreation and wildlife areas totaling 13,560 acres of National Resource Lands scattered along the Laramie Mountain foothills.

Resource Values:

1. Scenic wildland appearance, fishing, hunting and hiking.

2. Baldy Ridge and Squaw Mountain contain natural features that support approximately 200 elk and numerous deer. Baldy Ridge is also home for a small herd of bighorn sheep.

3. Deer Creek Canyon and Upper Laramie River provide excellent fishing for brown and rainbow trout. Mule Creek contains a natural brook trout fishery.

4. Valuable watersheds with extreme flooding occurring from Deer Creek Canyon and Laramie River.

5. Potential for locatable minerals, chromite is located in Deer Creek Canyon.

6. Productive timber is located on Baldy Ridge and Squaw Mountain.

7. Livestock grazing areas.

Conflicts:

Elk, Bighorn Sheep and Fishery vs. Livestock

1. Elk and bighorn sheep compete for existing forage with livestock. Heavy grazing along stream banks causes sedimentation and destroys protective vegetation needed for fishery.

Mineral and Timber Production vs. Aesthetic Values, Recreation, and Wildlife

2. Timber and mineral development would mar the natural quality of the areas and could have a negative effect on the fisheries and interfere with big game. Mineral and timber production would not be compatible with recreational development because of the small size of the areas.

Intensive Recreational Development vs. Natural Values, Wildlife and Livestock Grazing

3. The development of recreation facilities and heavy recreational use would not be compatible with the natural values of the areas. It would destroy the fisheries and disrupt the solitude of the elk and bighorn sheep herds, causing them to move elsewhere. Intensive recreational use would also create interference with livestock grazing and could require exclusion or reductions in some areas.

Tentative Recommendations:

* 1. Obtain protective withdrawals to exclude public land sale laws and mineral entry of locatable minerals and disallow mineral leasing and mineral materials sales.

2. Intensively manage wildlife and recreation values by developing habitat and recreation management plans.

3. Restrict off-road vehicle use where necessary to protect the natural values.

4. Acquire public access by low standard roads. An exception is Mule Creek area; provide access by trail. Access will not be acquired to the areas until management is implemented.

5. Allow small scale timber cuttings if management plans recommend thinning of trees to benefit recreation and wildlife values. Upper Laramie River and Mule Creek are excluded from timber sales.

6. Obtain intensive management of livestock use by implementing grazing systems. Exclude livestock grazing along Mule Creek and Deer Creek Canyon.

Head of Canyon above NPL

7. Permit construction of proposed Deer Creek Dam if impact statement determines the project will improve wildlife and recreational values and watershed conditions.

Alternatives:

1. Develop for intensive recreational use by constructing and improving roads and trails and installing recreational facilities.

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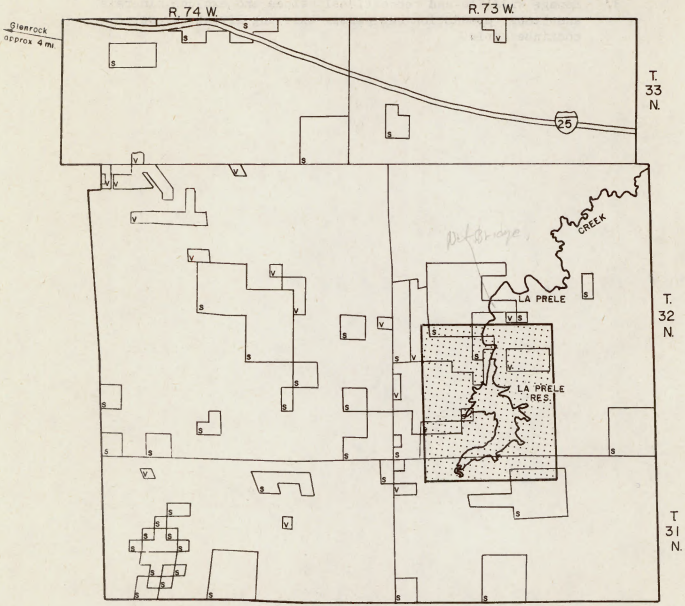
* 93% of the National Resource Land in the unit left open to mining entry and mineral leasing.

* 99% of the federal mineral estate in the unit left open to mining entry and mineral leasing.

2. Manage the areas for mineral and timber production and livestock grazing and make wildlife and recreational values secondary.

3. Manage wildlife and recreational values and exclude minerals and timber production but permit existing livestock use to continue as is.

RECOMMENDATION AREA 2
LA PRELE CREEK RESERVOIR



Resource Values: Brown trout, Rainbow trout, Deer winter range

RECOMMENDATION AREA 2 - LaPRELE CREEK RESERVOIR

This area includes 880 acres of National Resource Lands intermingled with private and state land located about 20 miles southwest of Douglas adjacent to Ayres Natural Bridge Park.

Resource Values:

1. Produces large brown and rainbow trout.

2. Valuable for picnicking, camping, fishing, hunting and hiking.

3. Part of crucial deer winter range and contains chukars.

4. Livestock grazing area.

5. Exploration area for oil and gas.

Conflicts:

Oil and Gas Exploration vs. Wildlife and Recreational Values

1. Oil and gas exploration is not compatible with the existing wildlife and scenic values and various recreational uses.

Recreational Development vs. Wildlife and Livestock Management

2. Recreational development will bring more people to the area resulting in additional pressure on wildlife and will interfere with livestock operations.

Livestock Grazing vs. Wildlife

3. Continuous livestock use along the creek will reduce the fishing potential and unless livestock is properly managed on the crucial deer winter range, overutilization of mountain mahogany will occur.

Tentative Recommendations:

1. If existing dam is reconstructed, improve wildlife values and provide recreational use by designing and implementing a recreation management plan.

2. Investigate the potential of acquiring additional lands through an exchange along the creek below the dam and adjacent to the reservoir.

3. Acquire public access to the reservoir from State Highway 91.

4. Exclude livestock grazing along the creek from the dam to Ayers Natural Bridge Park.

5. Do not allow mineral leasing or mineral material sales.

6. Retain in federal ownership and close to off-road vehicle use where necessary.

Alternatives:

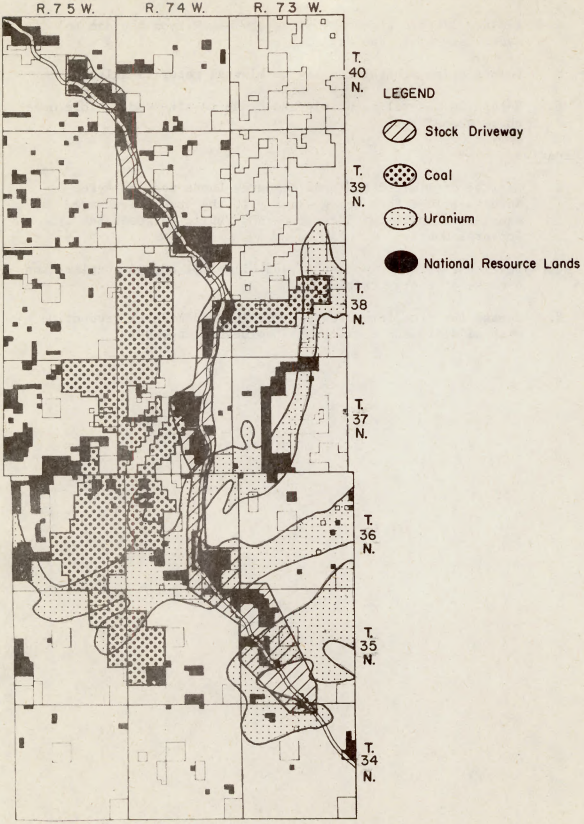
1. Because of limited National Resource Lands and the Ayres Natural Bridge Park being already in the area, encourage management under the Recreation and Public Purposes Act by Converse County.

2. Develop recreation potential and allow oil and gas exploration because of energy crisis.

3. Manage the area for livestock grazing and mineral production with wildlife and recreational values as secondary.

RECOMMENDATION AREA 3

ROSS ROAD NE Glenrock



RECOMMENDATION AREA 3 - ROSS ROAD

Area includes the stock driveway along Ross Road northwest of Glenrock. The stock driveway is from 1 to 3 miles wide on each side of the road and is present intermittently for over 30 miles.

Resource Values:

1. Provides access for antelope and deer hunting.

2. Trail is seldom used as a livestock driveway.

3. Oil, coal and uranium deposits are located underneath.

4. Important livestock grazing area.

5. Bozeman Trail route used by emigrants traveling to the Montana gold fields and by the military for movement of troops against the Sioux. Indian battles occurred at Brown's Spring and Sage Creek. Camping location and stage stations were used at Sage Creek, Brown's Springs, Dry Fork of the Cheyenne River, Sand Creek and Antelope Springs. Evidence of the trail route and ruins of the stage station can still be seen.

Conflicts:

Cultural and Wildlife Values vs. Mineral Development

1. If the stock driveway is revoked and National Resource Lands and federal minerals are transferred out of federal ownership to accommodate mineral patent applications, hunting access will be lost and the Bozeman Trail will be without protection. If the Bozeman trail is not protected, physical evidence of the trail could be destroyed by mineral production.

Public Visits vs. Preservation of Cultural Values

2. If public attention is attracted to the area, the increased use could destroy the cultural values that are being protected.

Cultural Values and Minerals Development vs. Livestock and Wildlife

3. Fencing the Bozeman Trail for protection would eliminate livestock grazing within the protective zone and would interfere with their movements outside of the area. Fence would also interfere with deer and antelope movements. Also livestock and wildlife will possibly be excluded from areas being used for minerals.

Tentative Recommendations:

1. Retain stock driveway withdrawal along the Ross Road to continue segregation from public land sale laws for protection of hunting access and the Bozeman Trail.

2. Reject all land transfer actions but allow mineral leasing and mineral patent applications.

3. Conduct inventories immediately and construct protective fences and install interpretive signs where physical evidence of the Bozeman Trail exists.

4. Investigate the possibility of acquiring private surface where the Brown's Spring Stage Station is located, or where private surface is involved attempt to obtain cooperative arrangements and management.

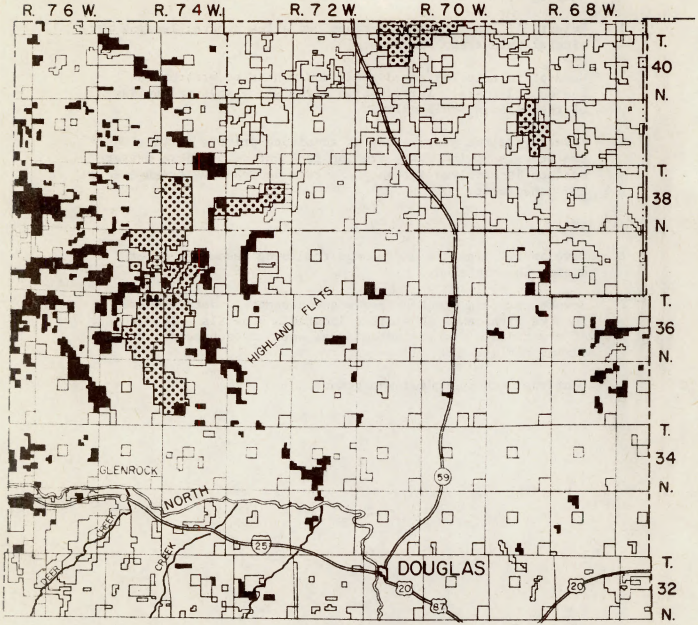
Alternatives:

1. Develop all minerals and manage remaining resources after mining is completed.

2. Revoke existing stock driveway and attempt to obtain a protective withdrawal to exclude locatable minerals. Initiation of a withdrawal to exclude mineral entry is subject to valid mining claims.

3. Continue with custodial management.

RECOMMENDATION AREA 4
COAL LEASING AREAS IN CONVERSE COUNTY



Stripable Coal ks 1/5 overburden + coal seams 20' thick or more.

RECOMMENDATION AREA 4 - COAL LEASING AREAS IN CONVERSE COUNTY

A portion of northern Converse County at this time lies within a "known coal leasing area." Some of this area is already under lease or prospecting permits and preference right applications and when current restrictions on federal coal leasing are eased or lifted it can be expected that pressures to lease the remaining acreage will be intense. Once leased, private firms can develop the coal. Therefore, we need planning guidance for future coal leasing.

Conflicts:

Subsurface vs. Surface Management

1. Since coal leasing can lead to mining, the presence of coal leases on a piece of land makes surface resource management for that land questionable.

Coal Mining vs. Surface Values

2. Coal mining can destroy, or at least greatly alter, surface values such as recreation, wildlife habitat, watershed, range, or cultural resources.

Mining Restrictions vs. the Economic Impacts

3. Restrictions on coal leasing and development could cause social and economic difficulties for industry and local communities and/or intensify the national energy crisis, which could cause serious environmental probelms in other areas.

Tentative Recommendations:

1. Encourage complete mining of known strippable coal reserve areas before allowing coal production elsewhere.

2. Mitigate impacts to reestablish soil, vegetation, wildlife and livestock. Do not develop grazing systems until mining and reclamation is completed.

3. Conduct intensive archeological investories prior to mining and excavate and salvage artifacts.

4. Protect the Bozeman Trail where physical evidence exists and inventory and protect the black-footed ferret if sightings are made.

5. Investigate the potential of designating mine spoil areas for off-road vehicle use and developing ponds in mined-out areas to establish waterfowl and fishery habitats.

Alternatives:

Allow Leasing Over Entire Area

1. Allow coal leasing over the entire area. Let the minerals industry determine where development will occur. Mitigate the impacts on these areas.

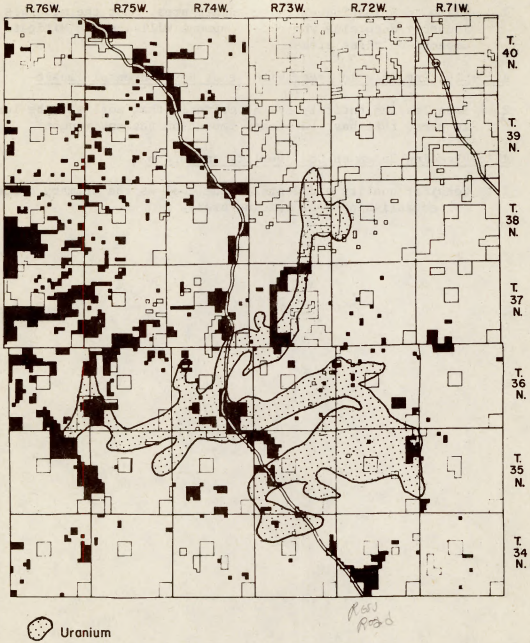
Allow Leasing Only in Areas with Least Environmental Impact

2. Base leasing entirely on the criteria that coal will be leased in areas that have the least impact on the environment.

Allow Leasing Based on Coal Quality and Depth

3. Consider quality and depth of the coal as the primary criteria for establishing coal leasing areas.

RECOMMENDATION AREA 5
URANIUM AREA IN CONVERSE COUNTY



RECOMMENDATION AREA 5 - URANIUM AREA IN CONVERSE COUNTY

This area encompasses about 9,400 acres of National Resource Lands. The entire area is covered by mining claims but not all of it will be mined.

Uranium will only be produced on those sites where sufficient quantities and qualities are present to economically support open-pit or underground mining.

Conflicts:

Minerals vs. Recreation, Livestock, Watershed and Wildlife

1. Patented mineral claims will result in the loss of public lands for recreation purposes. Extractions of uranium will cause a temporary or permanent loss of vegetation for livestock, wildlife and watershed protection.

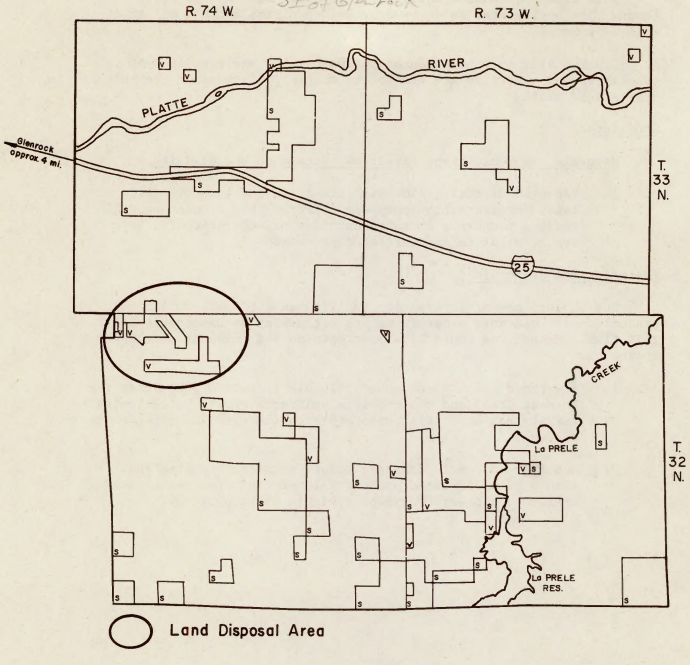
Tentative Recommendation:

Due to our lack of information and limited authority to control production of locatable minerals we are not making recommendations at this time. However we would like your opinion and comments on the following:

1. Are there cultural or other valuable resources other than the Bozeman Trail and the possible existence of the black-footed ferret that we should cooperate with the uranium companies to protect?

2. Are there sites in Converse County outside this area that should be withdrawn from locatable minerals for protection? Uranium could exist elsewhere within the county.

RECOMMENDATION AREA 6
BOXELDER CREEK



RECOMMENDATION AREA 6 - BOXELDER CREEK

This area encompasses 600 acres of National Resource Lands isolated near the mouth of Boxelder Canyon within 9 miles of the town of Glenrock. Interest has been expressed in purchasing the land through the Public Sale Act. Resource values other than grazing are not known on the northern parcel.

Resource Values:

1. South portion contains Fetterman wood Reservation, chukar habitat, and a crucial deer winter range.

2. Adjacent to Converse County Park which contains scenic and fishery values.

3. Livestock grazing area.

Conflict:

Livestock Grazing vs. Wildlife

1. Mountain mahogany, an important winter browse for deer could be over utilized if competition between livestock and deer for the species is not minimized through proper range management.

Tentative Recommendations:

Due to our current lack of data on this parcel of land we have not made a recommendation at this time but would like your opinion on the proper approach for us to take. Some possible alternatives are as follows:

1. Dispose of all the National Resource Lands through public sale.

2. Retain in federal ownership for wildlife, recreation and livestock forage values.

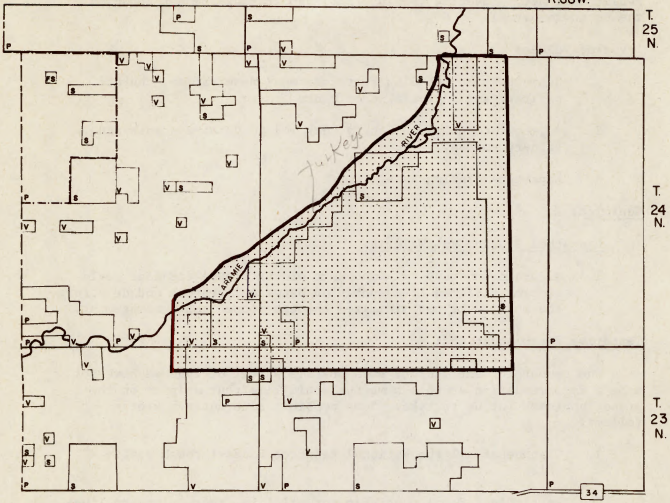
3. Classify for partial disposal excluding Brighton Canyon, Fort Fetterman Wood Reservation, and crucial deer winter range.

4. Sell or lease the land to the county under the Recreation and Public Purposes Act for inclusion in the adjacent Converse County Park.

5. Dispose of through an exchange to further public opportunities in other areas.

6. Are there significant resource values on the northern portion of the land?

RECOMMENDATION AREA 7
MULE SHOE FLAT



Recommendation Area

RECOMMENDATION AREA 7 - MULE SHOE FLAT

Mule Shoe Flat is a well blocked area of public land located 8 miles west of Wheatland, Wyoming and containing approximately 12,000 acres. Vegetation on a large portion of the area is in poor condition.

Resource Values:

1. Livestock grazing.

2. Wildlife habitat.

3. Watershed values.

Conflicts:

Livestock vs. Watershed

1. Overgrazing by livestock reduces the amount of ground cover necessary for watershed protection.

Livestock vs. Wildlife

2. Overgrazing by livestock reduces the amount of forage and cover available for wildlife.

Tentative Recommendation:

1. Establish winter season of use and specify livestock numbers to improve range conditions.

Alternatives:

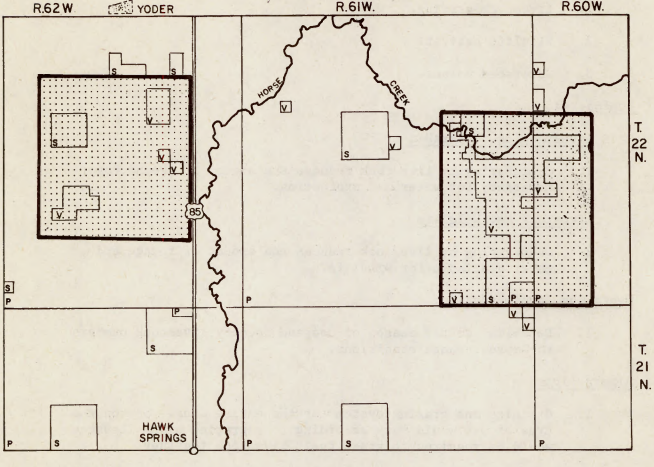
1. Organize one grazing system for the entire area. Season and area of use would vary according to a grazing plan. Lessees would be required to graze their livestock together.

2. Set up a grazing plan for each grazing lease where season of use would vary from year to year in order to meet the growth and seeding requirements of the forage plants.

3. Investigate the potential of the area for urban development associated with the future population growth of Wheatland.

RECOMMENDATION AREA 8

TABLE MOUNTAIN, BUMP-SULLIVAN AND SPRINGER WILDLIFE AREAS



Recommendation Areas

RECOMMENDATION AREA 8 - TABLE MOUNTAIN, BUMP-SULLIVAN AND SPRINGER WILDLIFE AREAS

These areas include 2,140 acres of National Resource Lands and are being managed cooperatively with the Wyoming Game and Fish Commission primarily for waterfowl, pheasants, and public hunting.

Resource Values:

1. An estimated peak average of 120,000 ducks and 8,000 geese utilize the areas annually and about 3,000 pheasants are released on the areas each year.

2. Provides approximately 5,600 visitor days annually for hunting.

3. Livestock grazing on all three areas.

Conflicts:

Recreation vs. Wildlife

1. Uncontrolled visitor use may disturb wildlife and their habitat.

Livestock Grazing vs. Wildlife Habitat

2. Continued livestock grazing on these areas limits food and cover for wildlife.

Tentative Recommendations:

1. Develop habitat management plans in cooperation with the Wyoming Game and Fish Commission.

2. Close National Resource Lands on the Table Mountain Unit to motorized vehicles.

3. Exclude livestock grazing on National Resource Lands from the Bump-Sullivan and Springer Wildlife areas. Continue livestock grazing on the Table Mountain Wildlife Unit to achieve desired vegetation and cover for waterfowl.

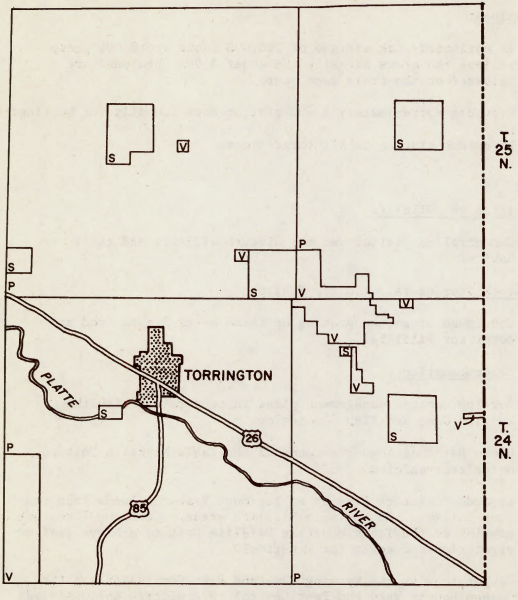
4. Cooperate with the Wyoming Game and Fish Commission and the Goshen County Weed and Pest Control to eradicate noxious weeds on the Table Mountain Wildlife Unit.

Alternatives:

1. Manage the area for livestock grazing and make wildlife habitat and recreation secondary uses.

2. Eliminate livestock grazing from all areas and manage solely for wildlife habitat and recreation.

RECOMMENDATION AREA 9
TORRINGTON TRACT AND TORRINGTON SANDHILLS



RECOMMENDATION AREA 9 - TORRINGTON TRACT AND TORRINGTON SANDHILLS

The Torrington Tract contains 260 acres of National Resource Land and the Torrington Sandhills encompasses 1,960 acres. These two parcels are within one to four miles of Torrington.

Resource Values:

1. Watershed values.

2. Livestock grazing.

3. Wildlife habitat and waterfowl hunting.

4. Community of warm season grasses unique to Wyoming.

5. Urban expansion development potential.

Conflicts:

Land Disposal vs. Other Resource Values

1. Disposal of the land through public sale would prevent public protection and development of the existing resources.

Livestock Grazing vs. Vegetative Ecosystem, Wildlife and Watershed

2. Without intensive livestock management the existing plant community could be destroyed, creating erosion and loss of wildlife habitat.

Recreation vs. Wildlife, Livestock, Watershed and Vegetative Ecosystem

3. Recreation development would result in increased public use, thereby interferring with watershed, wildlife, livestock operations and possibly the existing vegetative ecosystem that is being protected.

Tentative Recommendations:

We have determined that the Torrington Tract is not suitable for desert land entries, but due to conflicting viewpoints of how the land should be managed and developed we are not making a recommendation at this time. However, we would like as many opinions as possible to help us determine the proper approach to take. Some alternatives are as follows:

Alternatives:

Torrington Tract

1. Classify the tract for disposal through the Public Sale Act or the Small Tract Act to satisfy a need for land for urban expansion or intensive development outside the urban expansion area--either residential, commercial or industrial.

2. Classify the tract for disposal through Recreation and Public Purposes Act sale or lease.

3. Retain the tract in federal ownership and develop the recreational and wildlife habitat values.

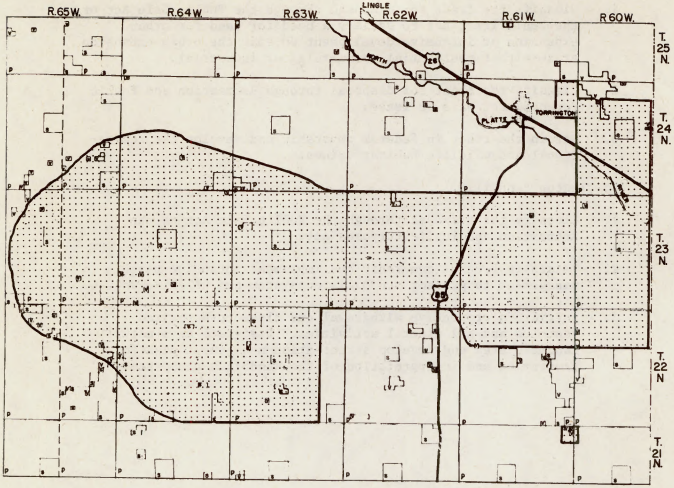
Torrington Sandhills

1. Classify for disposal through the Public Sale Act or the Recreation and Public Purposes Act.

2. Retain in federal ownership and implement intensive range management to protect sandhills ecosystem and wildlife values.

3. Initiate a protective withdrawal and close to motorized vehicles and all mineral activities. Designate as a natural landmark area and develop a recreation management plan for protection and interpretation of the sandhills ecosystem.

RECOMMENDATION AREA 10
POTENTIAL LAND DISPOSAL AREA



Recommendation Areas

RECOMMENDATION AREA 10 - POTENTIAL LAND DISPOSAL AREA

This area includes widely scattered isolated tracts of National Resource Lands totaling approximately 2,120 acres. These lands are intermingled with farm lands south of Torrington and may be suitable for farming if water were available.

Resource Values:

1. Livestock grazing.

2. Limited pheasant hunting.

3. Possibly suitable for agriculture.

Conflict:

National Resource Lands vs. Private Ownership

1. Transferring National Resource Lands out of federal ownership would likely restrict or eliminate public use of the land.

Tentative Recommendations:

These isolated tracts of National Resource Lands appear to be potentially suited for land disposal through the Public Sale and the Desert Land Entry Acts. However, due to lack of data, we have not made recommendations at this time. We would like your comments on the following:

1. Are there any tracts that should be retained in federal ownership because of significant resource values?

2. Are there other areas in the planning unit suitable for desert land entries?

3. Should the rest of the planning unit be closed to desert land entries if additional areas are not identified?

Suitability Criteria for Desert Land Entry

1. At least one eighth of each legal subdivision of the land in the application must be irrigable.

2. Applicant must show that he can develop a permanent irrigation system which will irrigate all the irrigable portion of the land under application.

3. The applicant must show that he can develop a permanent water right to enough water to properly irrigate all the irrigable portion of the land.

4. The proposal must be economically feasible.

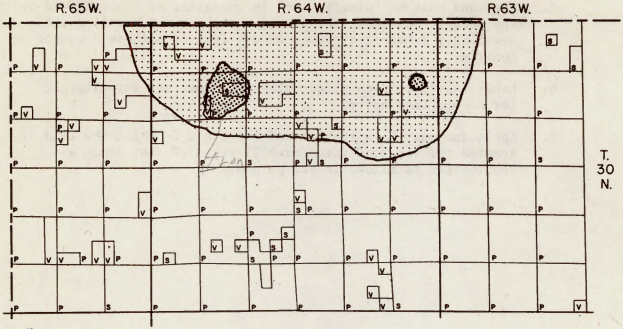
5. The land must be "desert land" in character as contemplated by the Desert Land Act. This means that land which will raise a reasonably remunerative crop by dry farming methods does not qualify.

6. Lands that have been effectually reclaimed are not eligible for desert land entry.

7. Applicant must be a resident of the State in which the land is located and a U.S. Citizen over 21 years of age. Only one application is allowable per person.

RECOMMENDATION AREA II
RAWHIDE BUTTES

So Lusk



Recommendation Area

Minerals

100 elk in area.

copper, graphite

RECOMMENDATION AREA 11 - RAWHIDE BUTTES

This area comprises 840 acres of National Resource Land and is located 12 miles south of Lusk.

Resource Values:

1. Subsurface contains deposits of iron, copper, graphite, and limestone.

2. Habitat for about 100 elk.

3. Livestock grazing area.

Conflicts:

Minerals Development vs. Wildlife Habitat

1. Development of mineral deposits could reduce or eliminate the elk herd from the area.

Minerals Development vs. Livestock Grazing

2. Minerals development would reduce the quantity of forage available for grazing.

Tentative Recommendations:

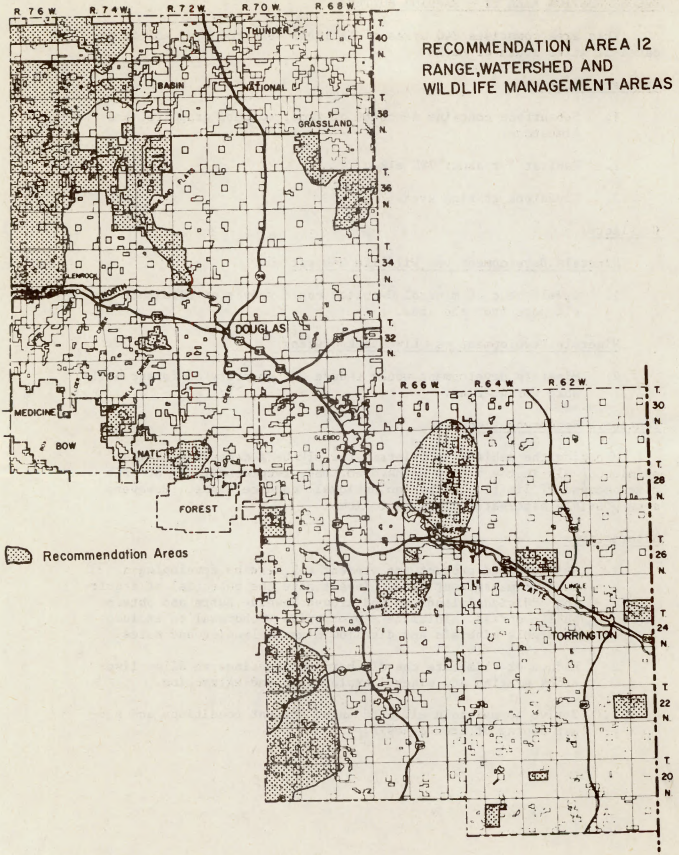
Managing the habitat to maintain the elk herd depends upon your opinion of elk in the area. We have not made recommendations at this time because of limited habitat on National Resource Lands. However. some possible alternatives are as follows:

Alternatives:

1. Maintain and protect the present elk herd by developing a habitat management plan. Investigate the potential of acquiring additional lands on and around Rawhide Butte and obtain public access. Initiate a protective withdrawal to exclude locatable minerals and disallow mineral leasing and sales.

2. Reduce or eliminate the elk herd and continue to allow livestock grazing and mineral exploration and extraction.

3. Strive to maintain elk herd under present conditions and permit mining of iron deposit.



RECOMMENDATION AREA 12
RANGE, WATERSHED AND
WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREAS

RECOMMENDATION AREA 12 - RANGE, WATERSHED AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREAS

Approximately 70 percent of the National Resource Land in the planning unit has been identified for intensive management of livestock grazing. Selection was based on range and watershed conditions, wildlife habitat values, etc. Livestock grazing can be managed to enhance any combination of surface vegetation values providing a climax soil is present.

Conflicts:

Wildlife vs. Livestock

1. Management of these areas to maximize wildlife habitat values would restrict livestock operations, including possible reductions in livestock use.

Livestock vs. Wildlife

2. Management of these areas solely for livestock production would destroy wildlife habitat by over utilizing vegetative species desired by both wildlife and livestock, competition for water, or interference with seasons of use, migration routes, etc.

Watershed vs. Wildlife, Livestock, and Recreation

3. Management solely for watershed protection would involve strict controls on livestock because they are controlable. Wildlife use, on the other hand, is difficult to control. Management solely for watershed protection might also restrict vehicle use, which could interfere with livestock and recreational uses.

Mechanical and Chemical Treatment vs. Aesthetic Values and Wildlife

4. Intensive management by means of mechanical and chemical treatment would conflict with aesthetic and wildlife values.

Tentative Recommendations:

1. Design and implement livestock grazing systems to obtain maximum vegetative cover for watershed protection and meet current demands for livestock forage and wildlife habitat.

2. Increased forage production resulting from intensive livestock management will be utilized in the following order: watershed protection, existing wildlife, and additional livestock.

3. Do not implement mechanical or chemical treatments unless evaluation studies of grazing systems determines that applied management practices will not achieve objectives.

Alternatives:

1. Same as the recommendation for livestock except manage forage solely for livestock with all additional vegetation being utilized by domestic livestock.

2. Same as recommendation for wildlife except manage forage solely for wildlife with all additional vegetation being utilized by wildlife.

3. Same as recommendation except manage forage solely for watershed protection with all additional vegetation being left for a protective cover.

4. Use chemicals and mechanical devices to manipulate the vegetation to meet all demands on a recurring basis.

DATA WEAKNESSES *presented*

We realize our data is incomplete. That's one of the reasons we're coming to you. We need to know what you know about these resources, so that we can make the best possible land use management plans. Won't you help us identify resource uses and values of which we are unaware? We would appreciate your help in answering the following questions:

1. Where are cultural resources located?

2. Where are excessive erosion areas on National Resource Lands?

3. Where are potential ORV use areas or which areas are receiving excessive damages from ORV's?

4. Which areas are being over utilized by wildlife or domestic livestock?

5. Are there areas where restricted use should be required?

6. Where are communities of noxious weeds?

7. Where are dumps and hazards on public lands?

8. Where do trespass situations exist?

9. Which areas have potential for public lands disposal?

10. Which areas have potential for urban development?

11. Are there any sites of interest to municipalities for recreational development?

12. Where should utility corridors be located?

13. Where are crucial wildlife areas?

14. Which areas contain scenic qualities?

15. Which areas need public access?

16. Are there other areas where coal and uranium reserves are located?

17. Which areas need water for wildlife and livestock?

18. Are there other areas where special protection and development of resources are needed?

19. Anything else you want to tell BLM? — *open discussion here.*

COMMENT SHEET

WHY WE WANT YOUR IDEAS

In this presentation we have attempted to identify and explain the land use recommendations and alternatives as we see them. There are many possible uses for these lands, but often such uses are conflicting. We would appreciate your help in resolving the conflicts and identifying any other possible uses or problems of which we may not have been aware. If a resource use that is important to you is not discussed, it is because of our lack of knowledge of it, not our lack of concern for it. We need your ideas on how the 239,000 acres of National Resource Land in Converse, Platte, and Goshen Counties should be used to make the best land use decisions possible. Written comments are generally most valuable, but whether in writing or spoken at public meetings, we need your input.

WHO TO SEND THEM TO

Area Manager
Platte River Resource Area
Bureau of Land Management
P.O. Box 2834
Casper, WY 82601

WHAT WE'LL DO WITH THEM

Once all the public comments are gathered and analyzed, all the alternatives will be carefully weighed and land use decisions will be made. If public participation brings out information that markedly alters our recommendations, further public meetings may be held to present revised recommendations.

DECISION NOTIFICATION

Any person who writes us a letter commenting on the ideas presented in our public meetings will get a personal response. Planning decisions will also be disseminated through the news media.

IS MORE DETAILED INFORMATION AVAILABLE?

Yes, BLM planning materials can be reviewed at the Casper District office.